

Specimens examined: INDIA - Karnataka State, Dakshina Kannada dist. Near Padubidri, 21.ix.1996 K.G. Bhat 11013 (BSI & K)

This species is similar to *C. pallida* Aiton but differs in having prominent stipules.

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38. A NEW RECORD OF THE GENUS *MOLINERIA* COLLA (HYPOXIDACEAE) FOR THE STATE OF MAHARASHTRA

(With one plate)

During a botanical excursion to Eastern Maharashtra, some sterile specimens of Hypoxidaceae were collected from a place named Daldalkui in Bhandara dist. on November 4, 1995. In the absence of flowering and fruiting, the specimens could not be identified at that time. They were brought to Shivaji University and planted in earthen pots, where they flowered in October, 1996. They were identified as *Molineria trichocarpa* (Wight) Balakr., which forms a new specific and generic record for the state of Maharashtra. A full description, citation and photographs are, therefore, included in the paper.

The Indo-malayan genus *Molineria* Colla comprises about 7 species (Willis 1973) distributed in Tropical Himalaya, Eastern India, Tamilnadu, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Sri Lanka and Malaysia. In India, it is represented by three species, namely *M. capitulata* (Lour.) Herb., *M. latifolia* (Dryanad.) Herb. and *M. trichocarpa* (Wight) Balakr. (Karthikeyan *et al.* 1989). The genus is closely allied to *Curculigo* Gaertn. but differs in the following characters:

Perianth tube produced beyond ovary; stamens perigynous; flower(s) 1 or 2; style trilobed; bracts broadly lanceolate, overlapping, 9-nerved, glabrous; petiole less than 3 cm long; seeds beaked
..... *Curculigo*

Perianth tube not produced beyond ovary; stamens epigynous; flowers 5-8; style not lobed; bracts filiform, linear, distant, 1-nerved, pilose; petiole upto 25 cm; seeds not beaked *Molineria*

Molineria trichocarpa (Wight) Balakr. in J. BOMBAY NAT. HIST. SOC. 63: 330. 1966; *Hypoxis trichocarpa* Wight, Icon. Pl. Ind. Orient. t. 2045. 1853; *H. latifolia* Wight. l.c.t. 2044.1853; *H. leptostachya* Wight, l.c.t. 2045.1853; *Curculigo trichocarpa* (Wight) Bennet and Raiz. in IND. J. FOR. 4:68.1981; *Molineria finlaysonian* Wall. ex Baker in J. LINN. SOC. 17:121.1878; *Curculigo finlaysonian* (Wall. ex Baker) Hook.f., FL. BRIT. INDIA 6:279.1892; Fyson, FL.S. IND. HILL STAT. 602.1932.

A perennial herb with thick fibrous roots; rhizome erect, stoloniferous. Leaves broadly lanceolate, 20-40 cm long; petiole 3-7 cm long, sheathing at base, channelled; leafblade 15-30 x 3-9 cm, plicate, glaucous, up to 20-nerved, base narrowed, apex gradually acuminate. Scape axillary, solitary, 3-6 cm long; racemes 4-5 cm long, 5-10 flowered: bracts 20-25 mm, linear, pilose. Flowers yellow, regular, lower bisexual, upper male, pedicellate; pedicels 1-1.5 cm, pilose; perianth lobes 6, yellow, 9-10 x 2 mm, outer ones pilose outside, inner ones glabrous; stamens 6, upto 7 mm long; filaments up to



Figs. A - C: *Molineria trichocarpa* (A) Plants under cultivation; (B) Closeup of flowering plant; (C) Closeup of raceme and flower.

4 mm long, erect, glabrous; anthers basifixed, up to 3 mm long, yellow, introrse; ovary 3-celled, ovules many, style 9-10 mm long, thickened and hairy towards apex, stigma capitate. Fruits not seen.

Flowering: Under cultivation, it flowered in October.

Remarks: *Molineria* Colla grows along stream beds in shady places in forest areas. It forms dense local populations along stream beds. It looks very similar to *Curculigo orchioides* Gaertner in the vegetative stage. It was not reported from Maharashtra state, probably because of wrong identification as *C. orchioides* by previous workers.

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39. ABNORMAL BRANCHING IN *BORASSUS FLABELLIFER* LINN.

We came to know from the students of a local college that a palmyra palm in the village Gollagonda, nearly 40 km away from Andhra University, had 7 branches, some of them also secondary branching. We visited the village and observed the plant. According to the villagers, the palm has been in existence for more than 40 years and earlier it had 15-20 branches, but some of those branches broke due to high wind. Now there are only seven branches. Among these branches, two branches have 2-5 secondary branches. The local people worship the plant and believe that it is a Goddess. Nearly 100 metres away from this plant, there is another bifurcated palmyra palm. One more plant in the nearby village of Nagaram has 4 branches, but due to recent cyclonic winds all of those branches were broken off.

According to Blatter (1926) branching is a rare phenomenon in palms. It is often caused by injury to the terminal bud, as in *Phoenix*

sylvestris (wild date), where the apex is continuously tapped for toddy. Multiple branching in wild date due to the terminal bud being struck by lightning has been recorded by Field (1908). In other cases, branching is a consequence of the replacement of flowering buds by leaf buds which develop into shoots. According to the literature, lightning and injury of the terminal bud are responsible for multiple branching. But in the palm studied by us, the above two factors (lightning and terminal bud injury) may not be responsible for multiple branching. If branching is due to either apical bud injury or lightning, branching may not happen again — it is unlikely to be struck by lightning on 3-5 branches again. The factors, which are responsible for caudex stem branching, again those common factors are responsible for subsequent branching in some of those branches. Most probably, genetic factors may be involved in this branching.